



the good news series

While many kids choose to stay at home and relax during the summer, there is an increasing trend of students choosing to attend summer classes throughout the state.

Gone are the days when summer school was only meant to catch up on missed classes or retake courses needed to graduate. Now students are taking classes for fun, to learn new skills, and to earn extra credits towards graduation.

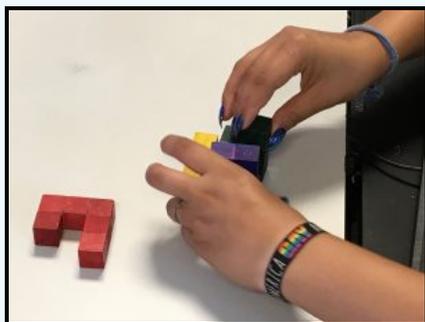


Nia Pair is one of those students. She will be a freshmen next year at North Star High School in Lincoln but she will start her first day a step ahead of her classmates after taking a new pilot program at The Career Academy

(TCA) offered by Lincoln Public Schools (LPS).

"I'm having fun and I'm earning credits for high school. This way I'll be able to finish school earlier and get a step up for college or a job," said Pair.

Pair was one of 32 students from Culler, Park, Goodrich, and Dawes middle schools who spent their mornings split between two courses: Introduction to Engineering Design and Culinary Foundations.



In the engineering course, Pair and her classmates used 3D animation software to design cookie cutters, puzzle boxes, and toy cars. The class then used a 3-D printer to bring their creations to life.

"It was really fun to get hands-on with the projects and actually make things. I learned a lot and had a lot of fun."



But that was only half of the fun. The class also headed to a state-of-the-art kitchen for their culinary class where students learned basic meal preparation skills, how to follow recipes, and finally how to take a set of

ingredients and create their own dishes.

Zainab Ridha said she wasn't sure what to expect and didn't know much about cooking before the class.



"We made everything from tacos to pretzels and cookies and cakes. I had fun working with my team to make pizzas from scratch. I'm one hundred percent glad I took this class," said Ridha.

TCA Director Dan Hohensee said the program was a great way to give students exposure to some of the options they will have during their junior and senior years at LPS, when they can attend TCA. It also offers them a head start on earning elective credits they will need to graduate.

The program was funded through a federal grant and offered to students who attended middle schools that receive federal Title I funds, money that is awarded to schools with high rates of poverty.

Hohensee said TCA plans to offer the program again next summer and double the amount of students participating.

See more of the students in action in this [PHOTO GALLERY](#).